

New Jersey's Black Population

An Overview of Quality of Life

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Blacks in New Jersey: 1950-1980  
An Overview of Quality of Life

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### Introduction

Black Americans have been a part of the fabric of life in New Jersey dating back to 1665. Blacks have contributed to the state's rich history and actively participated in its development as a major Northeast industrial/commercial state.

What has been the recent experience of this community of people in this state? How have they fared? What have they gained by the long journey from the South, North? What contributions have they made to their adopted home? And what is their condition today? These questions have not yet become issues of major concern to scholars, policy makers, nor in a significant way to blacks themselves. They may eventually emerge as important areas of investigation, if for no other reason than the desire of today's young black New Jerseyans to gain a clearer understanding of their heritage.

Racial discrimination is an accepted fact in the lives of black Americans. No black, whatever his station in life, is immune to the indignities of limited opportunity because of skin color, denial of equal protection under the laws of the land, or exclusion from unfettered access to the bounty of American productivity.

These realities of black life do not stop at the borders of the State of New Jersey. Indeed, in some instances, they have been even harsher in the state once called the "Mississippi of the North" than in most other states of the northeast. Yet, blacks have flocked to New Jersey over the years. They began the migration from the South in large numbers immediately after World War I and have come steadily since -- at least up until the mid 1970's.

This paper is intended to simply prick the surface of a field of inquiry the foregoing questions give rise to. In the pages that follow one is provided with an imperfect snap-shot of black history and a brief description of this group's current condition in New Jersey.

While the paper is about the blacks of this state, it is intended primarily to acquaint another oppressed minority -- the Hispanic community of New Jersey -- with the exigencies of black life. Hopefully, it will provide a slightly clearer explanation of the behavior of blacks as they interact with the majority society and with other minorities.

Perhaps a spillover effect of the preparation of this paper will be the generation of a level of interest in the

subject resulting in it receiving a quality of treatment not possible in this presentation. The task to be performed in this respect is one of primary research. Some work has been done on blacks in Newark, but little, if any, concerning blacks in the remainder of the state. To construct this history would be a challenge worthy of the community about which it will be written.

Part I: 1950- 1970

National Overview

The period between 1950 and 1970 was one of great migration of blacks from the South to the North. It is estimated that the South lost close to 1.5 million blacks in each of the two decades. As a consequence, the geographical distribution of the black population changed; by 1970, only 53 percent of blacks lived in the South and 81 percent lived in urban areas.<sup>1</sup>

In 1940, one out of 10 blacks 25 to 34 years old had completed high school; two decades later, in 1960, the proportion was 3 out of 10; and only one decade later, in 1970, about 5 out of every 10 blacks 25 to 34 years old were high school graduates.<sup>2</sup>

Unemployment rates for blacks have fluctuated since 1948. The rates were lowest (ranging about 4.5 to 5.4 percent) during the Korean war years (1951 to 1953). After the Korean war, rates began to rise and reached high levels (approaching 14 percent) between 1958 and 1963, reflecting the effects of the 1957-58 and 1960-61 recessions. Declines to lows of 6.7 and 6.4 percent were recorded in the mid-and

late 1960's, but by 1970, jobless rates had begun to creep upward again.<sup>3</sup>

In examining this period of special note is the 1960 decade, especially the mid-and late 1960's when blacks made major social and economic advances in income, employment, education, voter participation, home ownership, and election to public office, and the number of blacks in poverty were reduced. It has been suggested that expanded government programs, the civil rights movement, and efforts to reduce segregation and discrimination were some of the factors which contributed to the progress.<sup>4</sup>

#### Focus on New Jersey

##### Population: Growth and Distribution

In 1950 New Jersey's black population numbered 318,000. By 1960 the figure had increased to 513,663 and in 1970 the census reported that 770,292 blacks lived in New Jersey, more than double the number in 1950.

Throughout this period blacks were concentrated in the state's urban areas. By 1970 more than 90 percent of New Jersey's blacks or 729,053 lived in cities of 2,500 or more. The increasing presence of blacks in New Jersey life came during a period when whites abandoned the cities for

suburban areas. Blacks thus inherited communities affording few real opportunities.<sup>5</sup>

Each of the state's six largest cities almost tripled their black population between 1950 and 1970. Newark experienced a substantial increase, from 74,775 in 1950 to 207,458 in 1970; Jersey City went from 20,785 to 54,592 and Camden increased from 17,365 to 40,132.

Overall, blacks accounted for 6.5 percent of New Jersey's total population in 1950; by 1970 the figure had increased to 10.7 percent. The dramatic increase in the size of New Jersey's black population during this period is uniformly attributed to the fact that many more jobs were available in the state following World War II. Black migration from the South to the state was as active in the post WWII period as it had been just after the first World War. Table I shows the change in population for the state, its counties, the six largest cities, and other cities with black concentrations.

#### Living in New Jersey

The experience of black migrants coming into New Jersey from the South was in some ways similar to that of the European immigrants, especially those of peasant



TABLE 1  
Black Population in New Jersey: 1950-1970

	1950	1960	1970
State Total (All Races)	4,835,329	6,067,412	7,168,164
State Total (Blacks)	318,100	513,663	770,292
Atlantic County	21,506	28,225	30,40
Atlantic City	15,782	21,532	20,937
Bergen County	10,899	16,269	24,915
Burlington County	10,926	14,280	28,162
Camden County	22,625	35,297	52,318
Camden	17,365	27,721	40,132
Cape May County	2,895	3,902	4,772
Cumberland County	8,826	13,028	16,566
Essex County	104,307	190,737	279,136
East Orange	9,062	19,220	40,099
Montclair	9,065	10,312	11,932
Newark	74,775	137,467	207,458
Orange	7,	8,269	11,630
Gloucester County	8,684	12,262	14,444
Hudson County	23,780	41,327	61,095
Jersey City	20,785	36,665	54,595
Hunterdon County	883	1,128	1,166
Mercer County	20,427	33,714	49,802
Trenton	14,390	25,568	39,671
Middlesex County	9,685	16,487	26,067
Monmouth County	20,415	30,730	38,275
Morris County	4,108	5,375	8,483
Ocean County	1,536	3,351	6,261
Passaic County	11,991	26,779	50,199
Paterson	8,110	21,061	38,919
Salem County	6,204	8,812	9,233
Somerset County	3,111	4,476	7,166
Sussex County	116	160	311
Union County	25,316	37,972	60,723
Elizabeth	7,355	11,654	17,480
Plainfield	5,724	9,836	18,749
Warren County	325	542	795

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, Census of Population: N.J. 1950, 1960, 1970

origin. Like these, most blacks arriving in this state lacked industrial skills and were limited to such occupations as longshoremen, construction laborers (when not excluded by labor unions) and factory workers. Technological advances after World War II, however, progressively eliminated many unskilled jobs and consequently forced many of the state's blacks who lacked skills into a permanent caste of unemployables. In a sense, the bottom rung of the occupational ladder on which most of the immigrants had begun their upward climb was removed. The results were a much higher rate of unemployment and a considerably lower median income among blacks than among the state's general population. Racial prejudice was also a powerful factor in limiting the occupational opportunities of blacks.<sup>6</sup>

In recognition of the great difficulties faced by the State's black population, the state legislature created a Commission on Urban Colored Population in 1941 to study the plight of the blacks in New Jersey. Although Governor Charles Edison vetoed the bill establishing the commission, the members of the legislature were sufficiently committed to it that the bill was enacted over his veto. The commission was to examine, enforce and recommend measures to improve the economic, cultural, health and living conditions

of the urban colored population of the State. Consisting of three members (one named by the Governor, one by the Senate President and one by the Speaker of the Assembly for terms of five, four and three years respectively) the commission annually reported to the legislature on its investigation of individual reports of discrimination.<sup>7</sup> Although the commission existed in law until 1980 when Governor Byrne recommended repeal of the statute as part of an effort to eliminate various obsolete statutes, its last annual report appeared in 1947. That report was devoted to an alleged case of discrimination in Hudson county. According to Governor Byrne the need for this early ombudsman-type commission in New Jersey was erased with the N.J. Law Against Discrimination of 1945 and the establishment of the State's Division on Civil Rights in 1947.<sup>8</sup>

In 1945 New Jersey became one of the first states to create a Division against Discrimination. Its authority covered racial discrimination in employment, and after 1949 in places of public accommodation.<sup>9</sup> The State's new constitution, adopted in 1947, explicitly prohibited discrimination against any person in the exercise of his civil rights and segregation in the militia or public schools

because of religion, race, color, ancestry, or national origin. The Committee on Civil Liberties appointed by Governor Alfred W. Driscoll in 1948 recommended further legislation to translate these constitutional principles into effective guarantees.<sup>10</sup> In 1947 New Jersey desegregated its national guard and in 1954, 1957, and 1961 enacted laws forbidding discrimination in public housing and some privately financed housing.<sup>11</sup>

These actions by state government to remove barriers denying blacks equal rights in employment, education, and housing, however, fell far short of what was needed. In a study prepared by students at Rutgers University's Law School under the direction of Professor Alfred W. Blumrosen in 1964 the following is reported:

Employment. In 1961, Negroes, nationally, constituted 11 percent of the population. (In New Jersey they were 8.4 percent of the population.) Their unemployment rate was 18 percent, while the unemployment rate of whites was 5.5 percent. In a situation where the type of work needed was undergoing rapid change, the Negroes were disproportionately represented in the unskilled category and underrepresented in the skilled category. Nine percent of employed Negroes held skilled jobs, while 20 percent of the

employed whites held such jobs. Employment income reflected the difference in job status; average annual income for Negro workers in 1960 was \$3,075, and for whites, \$5,137 (see Table 2 for comparison of median incomes between New Jersey blacks and whites).

Housing. New Jersey seems to fit the national pattern of development of cities as regards race. The non-white population of the cities is increasing at a more rapid rate than the white population (in Newark between 1950-1960, the white population increased 25 percent, Negro population was up 63 percent). But the increase in Negroes has not been accompanied by an increase in available adequate housing. Nearly 50 percent of non-whites living in the cities live in substandard housing as measured by the census figures. In Trenton, 38 percent of non-whites live in deteriorated or dilapidated buildings. In Newark, the figure was 52 percent in 1960. While 8.7 percent of the state's population is non-white, they occupy only 7.5 percent of all housing units; of these only 10 percent were built during the 1950-1960 period, the remaining 90 percent being older. Median value of housing owned by non-whites was \$7,500, while the statewide median value of owned housing for both white and non-white was \$15,600.

Table 2

Median Income (Dollars) of Individual Blacks  
and Whites Comparing 1960 and 1970

	1960		1970	
	Black	White	Black	White
14 years and over includes persons without incomes.	\$2,479	\$3,796	\$4,014	\$5,207

Source: Census of Population, 1960, 1970.

Education. The Negro community has found its children in segregated schools because of the combination of segregated housing and the application of the "neighborhood school" policy. The Negro community believes that these schools, which tend to be in the older areas of the cities, are inferior and that the education which may be had in them is inferior.<sup>12</sup>

Blumrosen's report concludes by saying that the investigation of the policies concerning discrimination in New Jersey were disappointing. He suggested that further action by state government was required in order to bring about equal opportunity for New Jersey's black community. Four years later the Governor's Select Commission on Civil Disorder, State of New Jersey, in its Report for Action cited deficiencies in the areas of employment, housing, education, welfare and health available to the black community as major factors contributing to the civil disorders that occurred one year earlier in Newark, Plainfield, and Englewood.<sup>13</sup>

All available data indicate that for the majority of New Jersey's blacks between 1950-1970, the good life they sought through migration from the South systematically eluded them. In New Jersey, as throughout the nation,

the privations nurtured by centuries of discrimination against blacks festered.<sup>14</sup> Building trades and craft unions excluded black artisans and barred blacks from apprenticeship programs. Of particular importance was the decline of available jobs in urban areas due to the suburbanization of the white population. Industry followed the white middle class to the suburbs to retain its skilled labor and obtain larger parcels of land at cheaper tax rates.<sup>15</sup> Table 3 shows changes, during this period, in occupations held by blacks as compared with whites.

The progress of New Jersey blacks in every area of life was painstakingly slow. One of the most difficult areas for blacks to penetrate was the state's institutions of higher education. (See Table 4 showing percentages of blacks at various education levels in New Jersey.) As late as the spring of 1968, the state's college officials voiced concern over the blatant lack of black students on the state's four-year college campuses. At that time approximately 3 percent of the New Jersey public college students were black, as compared to the more than 8 percent blacks in the total population.<sup>16</sup> The state's response to this denial of access to blacks was to enact in 1967 a program to assist disadvantaged students, primarily blacks, gain



Occupation of New Jersey Blacks and Whites Comparing 1950, 1960, & 1970

Occupations	1950				1960				1970*			
	Black		White		Black		White		Black		White	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Professional, technical	1,701	1,635	132,610	62,483	3,494	4,656	194,594	87,995	9,925	13,214	286,055	151,853
Farmers, & farm managers	375	31	20,100	1,277	252	13	12,351	1,249	412	221	6,023	803
Managers, officials	2,066	561	176,224	21,910	2,089	536	177,943	23,559	4,751	1,569	216,202	31,816
Clerical	3,022	1,938	109,110	178,653	6,120	6,957	124,271	246,081	13,123	31,266	150,090	399,048
Sales workers	1,046	607	91,942	38,728	1,617	1,460	113,479	55,222	3,918	3,649	135,756	80,646
Crafts-men, foremen	7,932	449	292,072	9,848	12,525	673	324,794	9,094	24,405	2,058	362,461	15,311
Operatives	21,609	15,671	282,604	153,437	35,055	21,494	291,578	139,936	35,621	37,440	206,140	168,780
Private household workers	1,268	22,374	1,194	15,784	811	20,506	935	17,196	433	15,669	480	10,113
Service workers	11,326	6,313	80,521	40,747	13,635	12,789	86,178	59,759	22,402	23,704	129,886	110,616
Farm laborers	3,038	457	15,800	3,132	1,712	403	8,502	1,788	1,106	510	5,710	1,165
Laborers, except farm & mine	21,096	863	82,109	3,841	19,407	644	70,386	2,828	21,085	1,538	86,640	7,217

Source: Census of Population, New Jersey; 1950, 1960, 1970

\* Statistics for persons 16 years old and over.

1950 and 1960 statistics for persons 14 years old and over.

Table 4  
Educational Characteristics  
for Blacks and Whites in New Jersey, 1950, 1960, 1970  
(Percent by Level of School Completed)

	1950		1960		1970	
	Black*	White	Black*	White	Black	White
Total persons, 25 yrs. old and over	183,310	2,860,770	272,761	3,327,095	359,390	3,676,734
Less than 5 yrs. of elementary school	21.0	8.7	14.7	6.3	8.9	4.3
Less than 1 yr. of high school	66.5	46.8	52.5	37.7	36.0	27.2
4 yrs. of high school or more	16.3	35.8	24.5	42.0	36.2	54.1
4 yrs. of college or more	2.2	7.2	3.1	8.8	4.1	12.5
Median school yrs. completed	8.1	9.5	8.8	10.8	10.5	12.1

Source: Census of Population, 1950, 1960, 1970.

\* 1950 and 1960 Census used nonwhite listing

admission to the state's two and four-year institutions of higher education. The New Jersey Education Opportunity Fund program was the first effort focused on rectifying the paucity of black students in state colleges in the nation.

In the historical perspective, black migrants during this period could be viewed as simply the latest arrivals in New Jersey's long history of immigration, and as such they might be expected to rise gradually up the socio-economic scale as other groups had done before them. But there were important differences which made the task of these newcomers more difficult. Black migrants had few cultural resources to sustain and assist them in the difficult process of adjustment to urban life. Yet behind the wall of segregation blacks created a vast structure of institutions and organizations: churches, fraternal societies, service clubs, professional and business associations, literary, musical, and historical groups, political and defense leagues. While these activities attest to the social creativity of blacks, they had limited success in improving the lot of the mass of New Jersey's black population. Not only did the magnitude of the problems defy their efforts, but more important,

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the political and economic power needed to bring about basic change remained in white hands.<sup>17</sup>

It was during the decade of the 1960's, however, that a new sense of militancy animated many blacks who, through such organizations as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the Congress of Racial Equality, and the Urban League, protested the lack of equality in education, housing, and employment. New Jersey had its sit-ins, picketing, boycotts, and political pressures, as well as riots, to remind it that blacks were no longer satisfied to remain in their ghetto-cage.<sup>18</sup>

#### Political Development

One of the more beneficial results of black concentrations in cities has been the black community's ability to gradually increase control over its condition in those cities through organized political activity. Blacks in New Jersey during the period between 1950-1970 moved beyond the traditional vehicle for group political expression -- the church -- to organized community action and through it, to elective politics.

As far back as 1921 blacks had a representative in the New Jersey Legislature. Dr. Walter G. Alexander of Orange

served two years in the Assembly. Reverend Howard Woodson was the first and only black elected from Trenton (1964) to the Assembly. Jersey City's first black Assemblyman, Addison M. McLeon, was elected in 1966, the same year that Essex County sent the first black, Dr. Hutchins F. Inge, to the New Jersey Senate.

At the local level, it was not until 1954 that a black was elected to a municipal governing body in New Jersey. Newarkers selected Irving I. Turner in that year to serve as its first black city councilman. Fred W. Martin did not become Jersey City's first black councilman until 1961. Plainfield and Atlantic City weren't to elect their first black city fathers until 1968.

As Hagan states, "for black New Jersey, the road to political power has been a rough one...Moreover, in many cities where blacks possess political clout, urban decay, poverty, and unemployment had rendered their activities virtually a holding action against further decline. Political success in such communities usually benefits only a small segment of the black population."<sup>9</sup>

Yet, the early struggles were to reap rewards in later years. According to Leonard Cole in Blacks in Power "while in 1969 there were only 55 black elected officials at all

levels of government in New Jersey, by 1973 there were approximately 137. New Jersey was moving faster than most states, for only six states had more elected blacks, though fifteen had larger black populations...When Matthew G. Carter received the highest popular vote among Montclair's commissioners in 1968, he became the first black mayor of a sizable New Jersey community. In 1972 six New Jersey cities were led by black mayors, more than in any other state except Arkansas."<sup>10</sup>

On the other hand, Rosenthal and Blydenburgh were to state in their book, Politics in New Jersey, published in 1975 that in state government affairs, blacks and Spanish-speaking people were not well represented in New Jersey. Most of the people in these two groups, they maintained, "have received a poor education and either live in poverty or at mere subsistence levels. As a result, many have neither the time, energy, nor awareness to engage in meaningful political activity. 'Few blacks,' they report, or Spanish-speaking persons have been elected to important public office in New Jersey. Aside from the NAACP, there was no statewide organization to represent the black population until mid-1973."<sup>21</sup> In that year the New Jersey Black Elected and Appointed Officials Organization was

formed with the purpose of developing a statewide political force to advance the interest of New Jersey's black communities. Little was accomplished by this group, however, partially because of internal squabbles over leadership and control of the organization. Rosenthal and Blydenburgh state further, that "because of its smaller population base, the New Jersey Puerto Rican Congress has encountered even greater problems in attempting to generate political power at the state level."<sup>22</sup>

## Part II

### The Past Ten Years: 1970-1980

#### National Overview

On a national level, in the 1970's, the migration pattern of the black population changed considerably from the dominant pattern of earlier decades. The large net out-migration of blacks from the South and large net immigration of blacks to the North began to reverse itself in the decade of the 70's. Recent migration statistics for the 1975-78 period show that the Northeast region had a net outmigration

of blacks and that the number of blacks moving to the North Central region was not significantly different from the number of blacks moving from the region.<sup>23</sup>

In 1978, about three-fourths of the black population resided in metropolitan areas, and more than one-half of all blacks (55 percent) lived in central cities within these areas. The black population in central cities did not increase from 1975 to 1978, indicating at least a temporary end to the pronounced growth in the number of blacks in central cities that has characterized the past several decades.<sup>24</sup>

Black adults have been making educational gains, but still lag behind their white counterparts. For example, in 1977, about 21 percent of black men and women 18 to 34 years were enrolled in college as compared with approximately 27 percent for white young adults. The proportion of blacks enrolled in college remained stable between 1976 and 1977 but was higher than the 1970 level. In 1978, about one out of 10 black men and women 25 to 34 years old had completed 4 or more years of college as compared with one out of four white men and women in this age group.<sup>25</sup>

The 1977 median income of black families was \$9,560, not significantly different in real terms than their 1976



median. White families had a median income of \$16,740 in 1977, about one percent higher, after adjustment for inflation, than in 1976. Between 1974 and 1977, the real median income of black families did not change significantly. However, real median income of white families increased 2 percent during this period, from \$16,480 to 16,740. Because the median income of white families increased while that of black families remained unchanged, black median income as a percent of white median income declined from 60 percent in 1974 to 57 percent in 1977.<sup>26</sup>

In 1977, about 30 percent of the 5.8 million black families in America had incomes of \$15,000 and over. In contrast, 57 percent of all white families had incomes of \$15,000 and over.<sup>27</sup>

From 1975 to 1977, the jobless rate for blacks declined slightly from 14.7 percent to the still rather high rate of 13.9 percent. In contrast, the rate declined substantially for whites, falling from 7.8 percent in 1975 to 6.2 percent in 1977. The proportion of black men and women employed in white-collar jobs (professional, managerial, sales and clerical occupations) in 1977 were 23 and 44 percent, respectively. The majority (58 percent) of black men were found in blue-collar jobs. More than one-third (37

percent) of black women held jobs as service workers. Blacks continued to lag behind whites in the proportion holding high-paying, high-status jobs. For example in 1977, black women constituted about 11 percent of all employed women, but held only 7 percent of the white-collar positions.<sup>28</sup>

The number of blacks elected to public office has continued the growth which began in the mid-1960's. In July 1977, 4,311 blacks were holding office, representing an 8 percent increase over the 1976 figure of 3,979. Among the States, the largest number of black officeholders, in rank order, were found in Mississippi (295 officials), Illinois (281 officials), and Louisiana (276 officials). The majority (about 60 percent) of black officeholders were in the South.<sup>29</sup>

#### Focus on New Jersey

The decade of the 1970's began on an emotional high note for blacks in New Jersey. Just three years after the Newark rebellion of 1967, one of America's most costly civil disturbances, (26 people killed and over 15 million dollars in property damages) Newark, New Jersey elected a black man, Kenneth A. Gibson, to the office of mayor.

Gibson was the first of his race to hold this high office in a major Northeastern city. Throughout New Jersey black expectations were buoyed by this development in the State's largest city. Many anticipated a continued expansion of black progress, primarily political but economic and social as well, flowing from this major success in Newark. The state's black community was in for serious disappointment.

By 1976, it was estimated by the U.S. Census Bureau that blacks in New Jersey had increased in number to about 782,000, a little less than 12,000 more than in 1970. But it was reported that fewer blacks in the state -- 53.6 percent in 1976 as compared with 54.1 percent in 1970 -- had completed four years of high school or more. Almost one half, 49.2 percent, of black New Jerseyans had incomes of less than \$5,000. Only 0.9 percent had incomes of \$25,000 or more. Approximately 38,000 or 21.1 percent of the state's black families were below the official poverty level.

Six years into the decade, the condition of blacks living in New Jersey, on the whole, was not encouraging. While gains were being made in the political arena and to some extent in public sector employment (at the state level and in a few selected cities) these gains benefited a very small number.

### Employment

Statewide job opportunities for blacks did not change appreciably during the '70's. New Jersey Department of Labor and Industry data for 1977 reveal a continuing underrepresentation of blacks in professional and skilled craftsmen categories, and overrepresentation in service and operative titles.

The data also show that the unemployment rate among blacks in that year was substantially higher than whites (in fact, double the rate statewide) and slightly lower than that of Spanish Americans. Blacks accounted for about 9.6 percent of the employment in the State, but 18.5 percent of the unemployment.

The unemployment statistics shown in Table 5, however, masks somewhat the seriousness of the problem faced by blacks in those areas of New Jersey where they were heavily concentrated. Table 6 gives some sense of the serious unemployment problems faced by blacks in several New Jersey counties and their more heavily populated cities.

These statistics apply to a period during which the state was recovering from the recession of 1975. Since New Jersey traditionally trails the nation in its ability to recover from economic downturns, the "bounceback" ability

Table 5  
New Jersey  
Minority Employment Status, 1977

				Percent Distribution			
	Labor Force	Employed	Unem- ployed	Labor Force	Employed	Unem- ployed	Unemploy- ment Rate
Total	3,367,000	3,051,000	316,000	100.0	100.0	100.0	9.4
White	2,997,000	2,742,000	256,000	89.0	89.9	81.0	8.5
Black	352,165	293,745	58,420	10.5	9.6	18.5	16.6
Other Races	16,835	15,255	1,580	0.5	0.5	0.5	9.4
Spanish American <sup>(1)</sup>	117,856	97,632	20,224	3.5	3.2	6.4	17.2
Minority <sup>(2)</sup> Group	486,856	406,632	80,224	14.5	13.3	25.4	16.5

(1) Not additive to number 1 (total) since Spanish Americans are previously accounted for in items 2 through 6.

(2) Sum of Spanish Americans and all races except white.

Source: Manpower Statistics and Analysis, Division of Planning and Research, New Jersey Department of Labor and Industry, 1977.

Table 6  
Black Unemployment in Selected Places  
New Jersey, 1977

	Percent of Unemployed Population	Unemployment Rate
Atlantic County . . . . .	27.8 . . . . .	18.5
Camden County . . . . .	21.7 . . . . .	16.9
Camden City . . . . .	52.1 . . . . .	18.4
Essex County . . . . .	44.5 . . . . .	17.1
Newark City . . . . .	62.5 . . . . .	19.3
Hudson County . . . . .	12.2 . . . . .	17.8
Jersey City . . . . .	27.7 . . . . .	17.0
Mercer County . . . . .	31.0 . . . . .	12.7
Trenton City . . . . .	49.6 . . . . .	13.0
Middlesex County . . . . .	8.0 . . . . .	15.1
Passaic County . . . . .	18.1 . . . . .	19.9
Paterson City . . . . .	31.5 . . . . .	19.1
Union County . . . . .	19.0 . . . . .	13.6
Elizabeth City . . . . .	17.4 . . . . .	14.0

Source: N.J. Department of Labor and Industry, Division of Planning and Research, 1977.

of the minority community during such periods of recovery is even more constrained. Although statistics for 1979 are not available for analysis one can reasonably assume that since no major improvements occurred in New Jersey's economic outlook, the 1977 figures are probably reflective of black unemployment today.

This view is supported by inference in the 12th Annual Report of the New Jersey Economic Policy Council and Office of Economic Policy issued in July, 1979. The report states:

It appears, therefore, that two major factors influenced New Jersey's economic performance relative to the national economy: the overall decline in employment in manufacturing industries and the decline of employment in all but the service sector in major cities. The intersection of these two factors appears to be a major cause of New Jersey's unemployment problem...Except for Salem and Cumberland counties, the rest of the negative or low growth areas are the urban counties.<sup>30</sup>

Perhaps the most conclusive evidence attesting to the continuing difficulties faced by blacks in their search for equal opportunity in New Jersey's labor market is provided by recent developments in Atlantic City.

In October, 1979, Governor Brendan Byrne appointed a special Task Force on Unemployment in Atlantic City. The need for such a task force under ordinary circumstances would not seem unusual given Atlantic City's history as a summer convention city offering little but seasonal employment. But in 1979, Atlantic City was the budding casino gambling capital of the Northeast. Since passage of the New Jersey Casino Gambling Referendum, billions of dollars had been sent to revitalize the city. Approximately 13,000 new jobs had been created in the city's labor market area. Despite the infusion of substantial capital investment and increased employment opportunities, the residents of Atlantic City had not benefited from the area's economic growth and expansion. Unemployment for the first quarter of 1980 stood at over 13 percent, far exceeding the state average. In February, 1980, the Atlantic City unemployment rate reached 15 percent. The Governor's Task Force was charged with the responsibility of explaining why this situation existed.

It is estimated that Atlantic City's resident population is about 42,000. There are no reliable data on the demographic characteristics of the city's population but



it is commonly accepted that the non-white population ranges from 35 percent to 45 percent of the total. This, however, was not reflected in the Task Force's finding regarding minority participation in Atlantic City's booming economy.

The Task Force Report stated:

Despite the number of state and federal laws and regulations prohibiting discrimination, it unfortunately persists. Under the provisions of the Casion Control Act, the casino industry and its contractors are required to establish and adhere to affirmative action plans for the recruitment and hiring of minorities and women. Available employment data for the casino hotels indicate that the casinos are attempting to comply with affirmative action regulations calling for 40 percent female and 20 percent minority representation in their work force. In the construction industry, however, compliance with affirmative action guidelines is lagging far behind established goals. Representation of women and minorities in nearly all the building trades is well below the 20 percent minority and 3.2 percent female representation goals.<sup>31</sup>

It seems only reasonable that if minorities were experiencing serious difficulties participating in the expanding

labor market in Atlantic City, they were encountering even greater difficulty in areas of the state lacking economic expansion. At least it can be said that because of Atlantic City's uniqueness, it will be the focus of continuing attention to see how it resolves the chronic unemployment problems of its residents.

#### Elementary and Secondary Education

During the 1970's, New Jersey attempted to confront the problem of educational inequality that existed between, primarily, urban and suburban school systems through changes in the allocation of public funds. The New Jersey Supreme Court in 1973 rendered its now famous decision in the case of Robinson vs. Cahill. The Court ordered the state to reform its discriminatory and ineffective method of raising and distributing educational revenues. It also indicated that the state had a responsibility to guarantee the "educational opportunity needed in the contemporary setting to equip every youngster for his role as a citizen and as a competitor in the labor market." (303 A. 2nd 295. 1973)

Through this case, which was brought before the courts on behalf of a black youngster in Jersey City,

the state sought to correct an aspect of New Jersey education policy that because of disparities in the comparative wealth of different communities, resulted in a vast range of disparity in the quality of education provided by different school districts within the state. With the enactment of the Public School Education Act of 1975, it was expected that substantial changes would occur not only in the distribution of public school funds but also in the quality of education provided by poorer school systems. Unfortunately for the state's black and Hispanic public school students this did not occur. A report by the New Jersey Education Reform Project in 1978 revealed that:

...urban per pupil expenditures have actually declined by 57 dollars per pupil relative to the state as a whole, during this period of 'reform'. At the same time, the average expenditure per pupil of the state's 23 lowest wealth districts, changed from \$147 below the state average in 1975, to \$243 below the state average in 1977. One chief beneficiary of the new state school aid formula has been the taxpayer in low wealth and urban districts. Under the pressure of huge municipal tax rates, these districts have used their increased state school aid to reduce school tax rates. At the same time, both the taxpayers and the children in moderate wealth

districts benefited as those districts enjoyed both the largest expenditure increases along with substantial tax reductions,<sup>32</sup>

As expenditures per pupil were falling in urban districts, so were levels of student performance in the basic skills. Of the 991,406 students enrolled in New Jersey's public elementary and secondary schools in 1978, 234,897 or 17.6 percent were black and 94,966 or 7.1 percent were Hispanic. Nearly one third (72,208) of the black students were enrolled in the public schools of Essex County. Union County was a distant second in the number of black enrolled students with 21,280. Hudson, Camden and Passaic Counties followed with 18,488; 17,881; and 17,392 black students respectively. Together these counties accounted for over half of the black students enrolled in the state's public schools.

According to statistics compiled by the New Jersey Department of Education, performance on the basic skills test administered in March, 1980, by students enrolled in the urban districts within the counties listed above was uniformly poorer than the rest of the state. Not only were test scores at all grades lower for these students (except for Elizabeth's 3rd graders) as compared with all other districts but the degree of difference between urban and

and other districts in performance increased between grades 3 and 6; and grades 6 and 9.

Table 7 vividly illustrates the fact that students in New Jersey's urban schools are, today, lagging far behind their non-urban peers in both reading and math. For those who assumed that school finance reform would bring about positive educational change for the children of the cities, the results shown on the table are disheartening. Indeed, in far too many instances, the 1980 performances of these students was worse than two years earlier.

#### Higher Education

Black student enrollment in New Jersey's institutions of higher learning has increased considerably since the late 1960's. In an earlier section of this paper it was indicated that black college enrollment in the state in 1968 was approximately 3 percent. By 1977 the New Jersey Department of Higher Education could report that among all students attending the states two and four year colleges and universities 10.8 percent were black. In 1978 the percent black had increased to 11.6 and in 1979 blacks accounted 11.9 percent of all full-time college students in the state. In the fall of 1979,

Table 7

Minimum Basic Skills Test Results1979-1980

Note: The data in parentheses denote the increase or decrease between the percent of students who met the statewide minimum standard during 1977-1978 and 1979-1980. A positive number denotes an increase; a negative number denotes a decrease.

District	Subject	% at or above Grade 3	% at or above Grade 6	% at or above Grade 9	% at or above Grade 11
Camden City	Reading	72.4 (13.5)	40.1 ( 1.6)	41.8 ( 6.4)	58.8 (-6.4)
		58.7 (22.8)	39.7 (15.8)	38.5 (16.1)	43.9 ( 0.2)
East Orange	Reading	74.5 ( 8.8)	50.4 ( 1.5)	44.7 (-3.6)	64.2 (-7.7)
		54.0 (10.9)	37.9 ( 6.3)	34.0 ( 2.1)	46.9 (-3.9)
Elizabeth City	Reading	91.8 (12.4)	58.0 (-1.9)	54.3 ( 4.0)	63.8 (-0.9)
		88.6 (21.5)	59.0 (-1.9)	63.4 (12.9)	63.2 ( 4.5)
Jersey City	Reading	62.2 (10.7)	43.6 (-0.1)	44.2 ( 2.4)	62.8 (-3.4)
		59.3 (18.3)	53.3 (12.7)	46.2 ( 3.8)	58.3 ( 3.1)
Newark City	Reading	66.4 ( 5.1)	45.7 ( 4.3)	44.0 ( 6.4)	59.5 (-4.2)
		46.3 ( 6.8)	46.8 (18.9)	40.1 ( 9.7)	55.3 ( 3.3)
Paterson City	Reading	72.1 ( 8.5)	52.6 ( 2.6)	43.1 ( 9.5)	51.5(-10.0)
		68.3 (12.3)	62.0 (14.5)	45.1 ( 6.2)	50.8(-10.3)
All Students in the state taking test	Reading	91.5 ( 5.2)	82.0 ( 6.7)	79.4 ( 3.1)	88.2 (-1.7)
		83.9 ( 8.6)	82.6 (12.2)	80.9 ( 6.4)	84.3 ( 0.3)

Source: N.J. Department of Educational Assessment Program, Minimum Basic Skills Tests, 1979-80.

blacks represented 17 percent of full-time enrollments at the community colleges, 10 percent at the state colleges, 12 percent at Rutgers, and 9 percent at the independent institutions. Table 8 depicts the distribution of blacks, Hispanics and all other students attending New Jersey's institutions of higher education.

Black enrollment at the graduate study level has also shown small but steady improvements over the last few years. In 1975, the Department of Higher Education could document the presence of 167 black students enrolled in full-time graduate programs and 491 in part-time graduate studies. By 1979 these numbers had increased to 677 in full-time study and 1,555 in part-time programs. Hispanics made even greater inroads, albeit, from a much smaller base. In 1975, 46 Hispanics were reported as full-time graduate students and 125 as part-time; by 1979, there were 227 Hispanics in full-time programs and 666 pursuing part-time graduate studies.

As important as the numbers of minority students enrolled in New Jersey's colleges is, of equal if not more importance is the course of study these students selected and in which they received degrees. In 1976, 45 black students were awarded degrees in engineering, in 1979, 72

Table 8  
Full-Time Students in New Jersey by  
Ethnicity, Fall 1977 - Fall 1979

	Community Colleges	State Colleges	Rutgers Univ.	NJIT & CUMNJ	Indep. Colleges	N.J. Total
Black, Non Hispanic						
1977	6,721	3,417	3,191	204	2,801	16,334
1978	6,789	4,507	3,202	200	2,809	17,507
1979	7,307	4,259	3,347	247	3,105	18,265
Hispanic						
1977	1,787	1,547	933	146	1,229	5,642
1978	2,227	2,422	1,056	149	1,238	7,092
1979	2,874	2,200	1,155	179	1,433	7,841
All Others*						
1977	32,864	39,736	23,486	2,736	30,280	129,102
1978	30,869	37,209	24,176	2,674	30,216	125,144
1979	32,830	37,049	24,009	2,756	30,520	127,164
Total Students						
1977	41,372	44,700	27,610	3,086	34,310	151,078
1978	39,885	44,138	28,434	3,023	34,263	149,743
1979	43,011	43,508	28,511	3,142	35,058	153,270

Source: New Jersey Department of Higher Education, Office of Planning and Research, 1979. "Higher Education in New Jersey: An Overview of the Recent Past."

\* includes non-resident aliens, Asian-Pacific Islanders, American Indian/Alaskan Natives and White Non-Hispanic. In 1977, this category also includes "Race Unknown."



received such degrees. Fifty-eight blacks received bachelor's degrees in the health professions in 1976 and 84 were awarded this degree in 1979. In mathematics, 6 degrees were conferred to blacks in 1976, and in 1979, 21 were awarded to blacks.

In 1976, New Jersey produced 3 black dentists, no medical doctors and 55 lawyers at its institutions. No data are available regarding the award of degrees in dentistry or medicine in 1979 but five fewer black lawyers graduated in 1979 than had graduated in 1976.<sup>33</sup>

#### A Quick Look Forward

In February of 1980, the five black members of the New Jersey Legislature, issued a report entitled, "Blacks in New Jersey: 1980." The report was issued in an attempt to draw attention to the continuing plight faced by too many of New Jersey's black citizens. After carefully outlining a series of major deficiencies in the quality of life available to blacks in this state, the report concluded with the following comments:

...Per capita income among urban communities is 25 percent below the state average. Disproportionate unemployment rates between whites and blacks exist throughout the state...

Twice as many (N.J.) urban school children function below minimum educational standards as their counterparts in suburban areas. Higher education enrollments are projected to decline during the 1980's, even though the number of black high school graduates is expected to increase.<sup>34</sup>

These words could have just as appropriately been written in 1970, 1960 or 1950, the period covered by this paper, in as much as the overall condition of New Jersey's blacks has not changed appreciably in the past three decades. For the majority of the state's blacks, statistics concerning employment/unemployment, income relative to whites, educational achievement, occupation distribution and almost any other measure of social condition are as disappointing as they were twenty or thirty years ago.

Unfortunately, there are no strong indications of major change for the better in the picture presented in this paper. Indeed, during the current recessionary period the immediate prospects for the black communities of New

Jersey are perceived by most spectators as perhaps as bad as any period in recent history.

### Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> Bureau of the Census, "The Social and Economic Status of the Black Population in the United States: An Historical View, 1790-1978," Current Population Reports, Special Studies, Series P-23, No. 80. p.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Hagan, Greene, et. al., "New Jersey Afro-Americans: From Colonial Times to the Present" in Barbara Cunningham, The New Jersey Ethnic Experience (Union City, NJ: Wm. H. Wise & Co., 1977), p. 82.

<sup>6</sup> Rudolph J. Vecoli, The People of New Jersey (Princeton, N.J.: C. Van Norstrand Co., Inc., 1965), p. 272.

<sup>7</sup> New Jersey Statutes. Chapter 9F. Sec. 52:9F-1,2.

<sup>8</sup> New Jersey Statutes. Chapter 341. Senate No. 3267.

<sup>9</sup> Leonard A. Cole, Blacks in Power (Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 1976) p. 32.

<sup>10</sup> Vecoli, p. 276.

<sup>11</sup> Cole, p. 32.

<sup>12</sup> Bureau of the Census: "The Social and Economic Status of the Black Population in the United States," p. 168.

<sup>13</sup> Governor's Select Commission on Civil Disorder, State of New Jersey. Report for Action. February, 1968. pp. 2-178.

<sup>14</sup> Cole, p. 32.

<sup>15</sup> Hagan, et. al., p. 82.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 83.

<sup>17</sup> Vecoli, p. 273.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 277.

<sup>19</sup> Hagan, et. al., p. 84.

<sup>20</sup> Cole, p. 33.

<sup>21</sup> Alan Rosenthal and John Blydenburgh, editors. Politics in New Jersey. The Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University. 1975, p. 103.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 1979, p. 128.

<sup>23</sup> Bureau of the Census. "The Social and Economic Status of the Black Population in the United States," p. 168.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 186.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 188.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., pp. 168-9.

<sup>30</sup> Economic Policy Council and Office of Economic Policy, 12th Annual Report (State of New Jersey: Department of the Treasury, July, 1979), p. 105.

<sup>31</sup> Report of the Governor's Task Force on Unemployment in Atlantic City, June 1980, p. 12.

<sup>32</sup> New Jersey Department of Higher Education, Profile of Degrees Conferred by Race/Ethnicity and Major Program FY1976 and FY1979.

<sup>33</sup> Lipman, Brown, et. al., Blacks in New Jersey: 1980, p. 39.